

***Later Medieval Metaphysics: Ontology, Language, & Logic*, edited by Charles Bolyard & Rondo Keele. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013. Pp. 314.**

REVIEW BY STEN EBBESEN

This volume contains ten essays dealing with various aspects of medieval philosophy from the 13th and 14th centuries. It is dedicated to Paul Spade, *professor emeritus* of the University of Indiana, who richly deserves to be honoured for his long and faithful devotion to Dame *Philosophia Medievales*, but none of the articles takes its point of departure from one of his works.

The book has an attractive look (if one forgets about its depressingly greyish cover which suggests that metaphysics is a discipline cultivated in the shadow-land of Hades). Most of the chapters have only few misprints, such as ‘*sic*’ for ‘*sit*’ in a quotation on p. 180 and ‘for God know’ instead of ‘for God to know’ in the same quotation, ‘Is this bare situation is consistent’ (p. 208, where the second ‘is’ needs to be deleted), and ‘fithen’ (*sic!*) for ‘then’ in the reconstruction of a complicated argument on p. 211.

However, disaster has struck in essay 5, where an auto-correction programme set to English has mangled the Latin quotations, so that ‘prohibet’ has become ‘prohibit’ (pp. 111, 116), ‘suppositio’ ‘supposition’ (p. 118) and ‘conveniunt’ ‘convenient’ (p. 119, twice). Add to this some errors that I cannot explain, like ‘quiddam alius’ for ‘quiddam aliud’ (p. 113), ‘alius est’ for ‘aliud est’ (p. 116), ‘et quiddam’ for ‘est quiddam’ (p. 122), ‘praedicta’ for ‘praedicata’ (p. 125).

Such errors are unfortunate, but it is also unfortunate that the editors have not imposed a general obligation on the contributors to provide the original Latin of all texts quoted. Some essays are exemplary in that respect, others sin gravely, depriving the reader of an easy way to check on the authors’ interpretation of their sources.

After these complaints I must add that generally the chapters in this book are of high quality. Their level of difficulty varies, but none is for novices in medieval philosophy. Some notes on the single chapters follow:

1. Rega Wood, ‘Duns Scotus on Metaphysics as the Science of First Entity’ argues that the second edition of question 1 Scotus’ *Metaphysics* commentary presents his mature view about the subject of metaphysics (first being). The thesis is well argued,

but perhaps a little more could have been said about why anyone should be interested in the question.

2. Gyula Klima, 'Aquinas vs. Buridan on Essence and Existence' starts with an attack on Anthony Kenny's objections to Aquinas' *intellectus essentiae* argument for the real distinction of essence and existence, but becomes more interesting when a different objection, levelled by John Buridan, is introduced. According to Klima, Buridan's objection only works in the framework of a different conception of essence and existence than Thomas'.

3. Brian Francis Conolly, 'The Form of Corporeity and Potential and Aptitudinal Being in Dietrich von Freiberg's Defence of the Doctrine of the Unity of Substantial Form' shows Dietrich to have held rather outlandish views, as complicated as the title of the essay. The very mention of 'aptitudinal being' may serve as a warning to the reader.

4. Charles Bolyard, 'Accidents in Scotus's *Metaphysics* Commentary' convincingly shows how Scotus, like most late-medieval thinkers, had problems with accidents and how his attempts to come to terms with them were insufficient. Bolyard suggests that Scotus was moving in the direction of atom accidents.

5. Martin Tweedale, 'Avicenna Latinus on the Ontology of Types and Tokens' is a well-argued reconstruction of Avicenna's views on universals, based on the Latin translations of his works. Unfortunately, the Latin quotations in this chapter have suffered severe disfiguration, as noted above.

6. Jack Zupko, 'Universal Thinking as Process: The Metaphysics of Change and Identity in John Buridan's *Intellectio* Theory, after a general introduction to Buridan's thought about universals based on his late works turns to a detailed analysis of the early *De differentia universalis ad individuum*. The main, and interesting, thesis is that Buridan tends towards taking universal cognition to be process-like, because any snapshot of the world would only reveal particular substances and particular accidents. It is, however, unclear how well *De differentia* supports Zupko's interpretations because of a misunderstanding of a crucial *quantum ad aliquid sui* "as far as some (ingredient) of it [namely of a 'subjective universal', i.e. a real entity like man viewed as a universal] is concerned". The two ingredients are extramental individual men and the universal aspect (*modus concipiendi*) under which they are considered. Zupko translates this as "with respect to its relation" and thus introduces into Buridan's theory a relation which is not there. The mistake may not be fatal to the Zupko's main argument, but it would have to be reformulated, at least.

7. Susan Brower-Toland, 'Can God Know More? A Case Study in Later Medieval Discussions of Propositions' tries to pan out some philosophical gold from a seem-

ingly silly 14th-century discussion about whether God can know more than he knows. She interestingly suggests that the debate shows that not only did medieval authors hold different views of what sort of thing the object of a propositional attitude is, they also differed about what it means to be the object of a propositional attitude.

8. Terence Parson, 'The Power of Medieval Logic' is the essay that in Parson's 2014 book *Articulating Medieval Logic* is referred to as 'The Logic behind the Metaphysics', which must, I suppose, have been the original title. But the revised title is better, for the conclusion is much the same as the book's, namely that "the logic that was practiced by medieval logicians is, from a contemporary perspective, rich and powerful. Unfortunately, its power was not exploited in detail by writers of the time" (p. 205).

9. Rondo Keele, 'Iteration and Infinite Regress in Walter Chatton's Metaphysics'. This delightfully well-structured paper introduces the reader to Chatton's ingenious method for defeating the Ockhamist trick of reducing the number of things needed for a proposition to be true by replacing some of them with non-reified conditions. Keele points out that Chatton seems to be caught in his own trap in his discussion of propositions about future contingents, but thinks that Chatton may have found a way out of the trap. The essay uses both published and unpublished texts, but only quotes them in translation, which is most annoying for anyone trying to follow their rather complicated arguments.

10. E. Jennifer Ashworth, 'Analogy and Metaphor from Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus and Walter Burley'. This is another in a series of magisterial papers on the development of the medieval notion of analogy that Ashworth has been publishing for several years. The central problem is how a semantic concept turned into a metaphysical one. Ashworth claims that the shift came with Scotus, analogy becoming metaphysicalized and metaphor taking over its previous role in semantics. I am perfectly willing to believe her, but I feel sorry for the poor analogy, which had a hard time proving its usefulness even as a semantic concept; becoming metaphysical certainly did not make life easier for it.

Sten Ebbesen

Professor of the Aristotelian Tradition at the Saxo Institute,
University of Copenhagen,
Denmark